

ADE DAILY NEWS CLIPS

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Some Still Say Second High School Isn't the Answer for Bentonville (KNWA)

"You know, continuing down the road after a high school has been voted down twice, to continue with the same solution again without exploring alternatives, that just seems illogical to me," says Rick Smith, a Bentonville parent.

Smith says despite the district getting a multimillion dollar grant, a second high school isn't necessarily the way to go for this ever-growing community.

"Myself and several like-minded people feel like if we go down the road to a second high school it has to be 100 percent equitable to the one we have," Smith says.

Which is something Smith says can't happen with a duplicate high school, splitting up the current enrollment.

"If there's a class that 20 kids have signed up for currently at BHS and now that AP class at one school has 8 and the other one has 10, neither school offers it," Smith explains.

"So, there's classes that go away."

Smith says that the future investment should go toward expansion of the current site and points out that academic achievement continues to improve despite becoming crowded -- as shown by recently released school rankings.

The district has held capacity and demographic studies to try to gather data on concerns like these.

Public forums on this topic are scheduled for the next couple weeks.

Step Up to Stop Bullying, Part 2: Monitoring Social Media (KLRT, Channel 16)

Video available at http://www.fox16.com/mostpopular/story/Step-Up-to-Stop-Bullying-Part-2-Monitoring-Social/10nmmNUH0kSDwY2rDnr_wg.csp

LITTLE ROCK, AR - The Pulaski County Special School District is stepping up, to stop bullying.

The district is using a new and unique approach to keeping students on the right path when it comes to social media.

They use websites like Facebook, Twitter, and even Snapchat.

The goal is to educate more than discipline.

If it works, then other districts in the state might hop on board.

When something happens, the first thing kids do is tweet about it or post it on their Facebook page.

Often they don't think twice, and that's a problem.

What may seem like an innocent post or comment, can spread like wildfire. and the repercussions have been extreme.

"There's been a rise, a spike in cyberbullying that has contributed to teen suicides."

The Pulaski County Special School District is doing something new and different that will hopefully change things.

Using social media websites, Deborah Rousch monitors student posts throughout the district, looking for signs of bullying or inappropriate posts.

"When you're a teenage girl and you have body image issues and people take pictures of you when you're not aware of it and post them for all to see... that can be devastating," says Rousch.

Technology allows anyone to send hurtful messages, spread rumors, create websites, video, profiles on social networks, and take pictures, and post all of it online in a matter of seconds.

The problem, according to Rousch, is that most students think what they post is private.

"If I can see it... an employer can see it, a recruitment officer from a community can see it."

When a red flag appears, she and the school's principal spring into action.

The first step is educating the students about the dangers of bullying.

"If you talk to them, they are typically willing to take it down off their site. They don't even think of the consequences."

"Q: Are there instances where discipline is required? A: Oh, absolutely."

Rousch continues to proactively monitor social media websites, hoping the State Board of Education will see the impact she is making, and implement something similar across the state, before another victim is targeted.

Batesville School Buses Collide; Six Injured (Southwest Times Record, Fort Smith)

NORTH LITTLE ROCK — A half-dozen students were injured early Tuesday when two Batesville School District buses loaded with children collided here early Tuesday, state police said.

The accident occurred shortly before 9 a.m. along U.S. 67/167 when the trailing bus rear-ended the lead bus as it slowed for traffic. Both buses had about 55 students on board, state police said.

Six students were transported to Arkansas Children's Hospital in Little Rock. Their conditions were unknown Tuesday evening.

Riverside District approved for new East elementary building (Northeast Arkansas Town Crier)

Riverside School District was granted and approved funding for a new east elementary school building.

The Commission for Arkansas Public School Academic Facilities and Transportation approved \$2.9 million for a new east elementary building to be constructed in Caraway.

The project will be 67 percent funded by the state partnership program.

"It is early in the process and it is going slower than we would like but we should be started by the spring of 2014," Riverside Superintendent Tommy Knight said.

Cahoon Steiling Studio architectural firm is working on the design.

The old junior high school building will be taken down sometime in the next couple of weeks making room for the new facility.

Knight said the gymnasium will remain and the classrooms in the gymnasium building will be renovated and used.

"I am glad to be able to be part of the next building project," Knight said.

The new facility in Caraway will serve students in pre-k through sixth grade.

Riverside moved into a new junior/senior high school facility located in Lake City on Highway 18 at the beginning of the 2011-12 school year.

Grant Awarded to BIC for Digital Communications Program of Study (Northeast Arkansas Town Crier)

Buffalo Island Central High School Business Instructor, Workplace Readiness Mentor, and FBLA Adviser Monda Hutchison is excited for her students, as they will benefit from a 85/15 grant from the Arkansas Department of Career Education (ACE) in the amount of \$51,782.85 for the Digital Communications Program of Study (POS) offered in the business department.

"Miss Monda," as she is known by her students (whom she calls her "kids"), wrote the grant and applied for the 85 percent grant last year, but there was not enough money to go around to all the qualified applicants. She did not give up, however, and she applied again this year; this time it was approved.

"We were at this year's completers' luncheon at ANC (Arkansas Northeastern College) when I was told we had received the grant," Miss Monda said. "It was like receiving a Christmas present. I am so excited for my kids and was definitely a 'happy camper!' They will benefit so much from the Multimedia POS start-up funding. It will allow us to enhance our program. We currently meet the framework requirements with the software we have been using, but because of the cost of the software we really needed, it has not been possible to implement the addition of better software. Thanks to the start-up grant funds, we can now provide software and equipment that will provide better training opportunities for our students in Multimedia and Desktop Publishing careers that require experience and training using the newest technology available at this time."

Hutchison has been receiving training in the new software for several years and is excited to be able to pass what she has learned on to her students.

"It (completing the grant) was a lengthy application process, but it was worth it," she said. "It is my job to train our students for the workforce and their future careers; receiving these funds will help me do a better job in getting that done."

She said she has already begun her search for software and determining whether the equipment in place in the department needs to be upgraded or replaced so it will meet system requirements for the new software and allow the software to be installed over the summer. Everything should be in place for the beginning of the 2013-14 school year. Additional new or improved equipment that will be purchased could include digital cameras, digital camcorders with remote microphone and tripods with hybrid storage capability, green screens, etc.

"It will be an exciting year for my kids, as they will get to work with some of the latest, up-to-date software and equipment available," Hutchison said. "Some of the software in the Adobe CS6 Master Suite of programs includes Photoshop, Photoshop Extended, InDesign, Adobe Creative Cloud, Illustrator, Dreamweaver, and much more, including an upgraded version of Corel WordPerfect Office. The new software and equipment will help provide an opportunity to increase the students' skills at all levels of Desktop Publishing and Multimedia. A part of the instruction will include being able to make commercials, public service announcements, movie trailers and posters, weather and news programs,

etc. As a result of funding provided by this grant, my students will receive valuable training that will better qualify them to work for desktop publishing companies, as well as radio and television stations."

The former names of the classes Desktop Publishing 1-2 and Multimedia 1-2 have been changed to Digital Communication I-IV and areas covered include layout and design, Imaging and Multimedia Digital Media and Audio/Video Production." Another change with this year's 10th graders requires that Digital Communication I-II be taken one year and Digital Communication III-IV be taken the following year. Taking one other class, Computerized Business Applications (CBA), completes the Digital Communication Program of Study (POS) and qualifies the students to be completers in that area, an accomplishment strongly encouraged by the AR Department of Career Education.

Hutchison said she really feels God took this grant application process over for her.

"I don't get discouraged often, but that's pretty much what had happened. This was the second year I'd applied for the grant. There just wasn't enough grant money to go around the first year; however, that gave those applying the second year a priority position. For some reason I just didn't feel it would be approved this time and was tired of the entire process. I had worked so hard on the grant application and have so badly wanted the funding so much for my students so they would have the same training opportunities as most of the schools in the state. It was at that point of giving up and feeling defeated and helpless that I 'let go,' which actually gave God an opportunity to take control. until I did that, I limited what He could do. It was shortly after I let go of the whether or not the grant application would be approved I learned our good news that we had received approval. That's what I had to do first, before God could allow the rest to take place. When I got the news we had been awarded the grant, all I could say was, 'Thank, you Lord!' I have such great kids and am excited for them to be even better qualified for today's technology needs in the area of digital communication as a result of our having the improved software and equipment provided from this grant."

An additional Program of Study (POS), Accounting, is offered in the BIC Business Department. Taking CBA plus Computerized Accounting I and Computerized Accounting II qualify students to receive completer status in this POS. The classes offered at the high school level included CBA, Career Preparation, f/k/a Workplace Readiness, Economics, Computerized Accounting I and II, Digital Communication I-II, and Digital Communication III-IV."

Miss Monda is completing her 24th year of teaching, having also been in banking for 11 years at Monette State Bank/MidSouth Bank, and returning to the classroom for the 1994-95 school year.

Public speaks out after Eureka Springs School Board bans constituent comments (Carroll County News)

EUREKA SPRINGS -- The public may not have been allowed to express their displeasure at one of the motions approved at the April 18 school board meeting, but they have used other venues to do so.

The meeting was one at which staff contracts for the year were voted on. After a lengthy executive session, all staff contracts were renewed, with the lone "nay" vote coming from President Al Larson not

to do so. Particularly controversial in the minds of many community members was the contract of high school principal Kathryn Lavender.

The board postponed taking personnel actions at its March 28 meeting, at which some citizens attending had hoped the board would address recent ethics charges filed against Lavender by a parent and the school's music teacher, Chad Martin, among others.

Supt. Curtis Turner had said that contract issues would be resolved before May 1.

Board member Karen Gros made a motion, seconded by Sam Kirk, to ban all future public comment due to "personnel issues," based on legal advice obtained from the Arkansas School Board Association.

After the April 18 meeting, many area residents expressed their opinions on a popular anonymous bulletin board.

"(Gros') explanation was that the public is free to attend but cannot comment, that the Board was very accessible," wrote "akerue." "When asked how they were accessible she responded 'email.' The truth is the Board members do not respond to email and have never once, that I know of, cited an email they have received from a voter regarding anything. They voted to deny public comment. Shame on the whole lot of them ... what are they afraid of?"

Akerue then suggested, "I think we should all show up at the next meeting with duct tape or a gag over our mouths ... though we might have to email them what it means."

"To not allow public comment is not only unwise of any elected official, it's disrespectful of the people you represent," wrote former Eureka Springs Mayor Dani Joy. "Politics 101."

"I regret it's something that's been recommended to us because it's pretty difficult to have a conversation," said board president Larson by phone Saturday. He said it wasn't just personnel issues the board was banning, but "everything."

Larson was one of three board candidates who ran as a slate in the 2011-12 election, along with Kirk and former board member Charles Templeton, under the slogan, "Open and inclusive."

"It's one further thing that limits our exposure to our client base," Larson said. "We're really not supposed to talk about substantive issues with the public, with parents. We can't talk with each other outside meetings because of FOIA."

He said he voted with the majority to approve the ban "because that's what our lawyers tell us is the appropriate approach."

He said the public can still get something on the agenda, which is not the same as making public comment during a meeting. There is a process for getting on the agenda, however, as outlined on the school district's website. A citizen must submit the item eight days in advance of a meeting to the superintendent, who will determine whether it is appropriate to have on the agenda. The item must be given enough specific detail to make the determination.

As for public comment, Larson said, "The best the public can do is to send us letters and emails, and the best we can do is not say a thing about these issues. These issues are extremely important, and the best the public or press can do is to have conversations with the superintendent. The superintendent is really ground zero."

Asked how the public could give any feedback on an issue that is put on the agenda at the start of a meeting with no advance notice in the press and voted on with no public input until after it's a done deal, Larson replied, "I know what you're talking about, and there are a lot of things in this world that don't make sense because of our being constrained by the legal system."

In other business, the board:

- * Approved Turner's recommendation to increase the district's contribution to individual health insurance by \$72.56, restoring full coverage.

- * Approved \$90,000 for the purchase of a new school bus.

- * Approved the hiring of Laura Evans, Adam Louderback and Beverly Wilson as substitute teachers and accepted the resignations of Katrina Pumphrey and Becky Sisco.

- * Approved the minutes of the March 28 meeting and the financial reports.

Arrest made in Atkins High School bomb threat (The Courier, Russellville)

ATKINS — The Pope County Sheriff's Office (PCSO) arrested an Atkins High School student late Tuesday afternoon who Sheriff Aaron DuVall said was involved with a bomb threat made that morning at Atkins High School.

The arrest was made at about 5 p.m. in connection with the bomb threat that occurred Tuesday morning and caused the evacuation of Atkins High School students and staff before classes began for the day.

"A white juvenile male student of the high school was arrested and charged with falsely communicating a terroristic threat," DuVall said. "He will be charged as an adult and with a Class B felony. He will appear in bond hearings at the Pope County Detention Center Wednesday morning.

"I would like to recognize the Atkins Police Department, Atkins Fire Department, Arkansas State Police and PCSO deputies and investigators for their diligence in this matter. I want to say thanks to the Atkins High School faculty and administration who helped with this investigation. We appreciate their help. We stayed on it and got it done before school tomorrow. We will keep the investigation open in case something else develops."

No other details of the arrest were provided by the Sheriff.

The report of a bomb threat at Atkins High School delayed the start of school for about two hours as authorities checked the building for explosive devices Tuesday morning.

The school was declared all clear at around 10 a.m., and students and staff were able to return to the school.

Arkansas River Valley law enforcement agencies responded to the bomb threat at 7:40 a.m. Students and staff at the high school were moved away from the school building, DuVall said.

Atkins Superintendent Boyce Watkins said the threat was discovered before classes began Tuesday.

"The Atkins Police Department and Atkins Fire Department, along with Arkansas State Police (ASP) and Pope County Sheriff's Office are on site," DuVall said around 9 a.m. Tuesday. "We are working the crime scene where the message was found. We hope it was an idle threat."

Watkins said parents of students were notified of the incident via the school district's School Messenger system. Parents were also notified that all was clear at the school.

No bomb squad officials were called to the school, DuVall said. The sheriff said if assistance was needed, they would have called the ASP Bomb Squad or the Conway Fire Department Bomb Squad.

Judge: Won't overturn football-barring ruling (Arkansas Democrat-Gazette)

A Pulaski County circuit judge has decided not to override a decision by the Arkansas Activities Association to bar a private-school student from playing football last year after he transferred from another private school.

Pulaski County Circuit Judge Mary McGowan denied an injunction in the case and dismissed the lawsuit last week filed by Val and Susan Hansen after the association denied their son, Jack Hansen, special permission to play on Pulaski Academy's team his 11th-grade year.

The Hansens filed the lawsuit Aug. 29, 2012, requesting that McGowan overturn the association's decision not to grant their son the waiver after transferring from Arkansas Baptist High School.

The association's rules prohibit students from playing in games for one year after transferring from one private school to another, unless it issues a hardship to waive protocol.

McGowan wrote in an April 22 ruling that "the decision by the AAA was not arbitrary," in that the regulatory association was acting in accordance with its jurisdiction and within its guidelines.

"The threshold question presented by this case is whether this Court has jurisdiction to decide a complaint based on actions taken by the AAA," McGowan said in the ruling.

She supported the decision by citing Arkansas Activities Association, et al. v. Meyer, in which the Arkansas Supreme Court held that the court's jurisdiction to review the actions of such associations is "extremely limited," except in the case of unconstitutional behavior.

"As no argument regarding constitutional rights was presented to the Court, it is not necessary for this Court to analyze the Plaintiffs' claims under constitutional standards," McGowan wrote.

McGowan granted a temporary ruling on Aug. 31, 2012, that allowed Jack Hansen to play for Pulaski Academy in a California exhibition game.

Jack Hansen, who transferred from Pulaski Academy to Arkansas Baptist in 2010 for academic reasons, was granted a hardship waiver to play for Arkansas Baptist that season, according to the lawsuit. Jack Hansen, who plays as a running back, was the leading rusher for Arkansas Baptist in 2011.

The Hansens' lawsuit contended that the association has a bias against Pulaski Academy because its football team won the state championship in 2011.